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An Essay Defining the
Difference between Rubella or Measles

Written for the

Degree of Doctor of Medicine

In the
University of Pennsylvania

By
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Maryland

Feb. 5th 1858

Rubella or Measles

The measles is a genus of disease in the class Pyrexia, and order Exanthemata of Cullen's Nosology. He describes it as a disease originating in contagion and affecting persons but once in their lives. That it affects persons but once in their lives, is for the most part undeniable, but as to its contagious nature there is a diversity of opinion.

The best test for the contagious nature of a disease, is inoculation; and Dr Home of Edinburgh, tells us that he succeeded in producing this disease by that means. The mode in which he effected this object, to his own satisfaction I suppose, was as follows. Not being able to procure matter in sufficient quantity from the rubellous eruption, he took blood from the most syphacical veins of that portion of the body where the papulae were most abundant, with which he inoculated several persons some of whom took the disease. But he has not told us under what particular circumstances he inoculated

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those persons, in all probability, the disease was prevalent at the time as an epidemic, and those very persons might have been exposed to the same disturbed atmosphere from whence the epidemic proceeded. I do not therefore think the experiment a fair one or at all sufficient to establish conclusively that measles is contagious. Admitting a virus to be generated, I think it extremely problematical that it is admitted into the blood vessels. A still further objection to the above experiment - If Dr. Home had said that he carried the blood to a distance quite beyond the sphere of the infected atmosphere (suppressing the rubefacient discharges to have prevailed at the time, and he has not told us that it did not) and inoculated persons with it, that they took the disease and that it spread from them as from a centre of contagion, his experiment would then have been more plausible. I have no doubt that the "semina morbi" were planted in the bodies of those that took the disease, either before the insertion of the

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The circumstance of a number of families or individuals of the same neighbourhood, at the same time or in succession, suffering from the measles, is not sufficient proof, as some have thought, that it is contagious, for if so, Intermittent Fever or any other atmospheric disease might be said to be so. Indeed it has so happened that almost every epidemic has been thought contagious at one time or other - arising, doubtless out of their extensive influence and ignorance of their remote cause. How often have we heard of the contagious nature of our common typhoid fever for whenever they have been known, they have been productive of the greatest alarm, spreading a panic terror among the Profession, who at the name of Typhus, thought of nothing but contagion, with which it was strongly associated in their minds. And this is not only a very error in theory, but leads to errors in practice highly pernicious. We might instance Yellow Fever as another source of like error -

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of a person affected with Typhoid Fever, and with it inoculate others, who should afterward become typhoid, would an enlightened Physician pronounce this an adequate proof of Contagion? I presume not! He would only consider it a curious coincidence. Yet I think the proof as strong in the one case as the other.

Contagion is a peculiar spore which under all circumstances, in all places, and at all times, will produce a specific disease, which, in its course, generates the same specific spore from whence it sprang. This has not been observed of Measles, as far as I know, and unless more conclusive evidence shall be adduced than has yet been done, I would rather believe the disease to owe its origin to some peculiar condition of the Atmosphere.

The Measles prevails at all seasons, but more frequently in the winter and spring; and persons of all ages are liable to them. They are preceded like most other febrile diseases, by chillings, general uneasiness, listlessness, loss of appetite, disinclination to action, anorexia, &c.

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And this condition of the system may continue for a longer or shorter time, until at last the eruption fever makes its appearance, and is accompanied with heat, thirst, dryness of the mouth and fauces, uneasiness about the epigastrium, nausea and vomiting, pains in different parts of the body, and especially the head, back, and limbs, &c. With these symptoms only, which are common to fevers generally we could not say with certainty, that the measles were about to appear, but were they accompanied at the same time, with swelling of the eyelids, and a copious secretion of a cold tear, and also with an acid discharge from the nose, and a hoarse dry cough, little doubt would be left that we were about to encounter an attack of Measles.

These symptoms usually continue until the third or fourth day, when the eruption makes its appearance in the form of red patches about the face and neck with a slight elevation of the cuticle.

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The rash continues for a few days extending more or less over the body, and about the termination of a week or ten days from the commencement of the attack it loses its florid appearance, and the peels off, but the skin does not regain its natural colour for some days.

The cough and fever do not always disappear with the subsidence of the other symptoms but on the contrary remain often unabated, and not unfrequently prove the most serious part of the disease especially in scrofulous patients in whom the disease often proves highly dangerous and even fatal. Nature is sometimes successful in removing them by a critical sweat or diarrhoea; but failing so to do, the most prompt and energetic treatment is demanded.

The more external form of the Measles might lead an inexperienced person to suppose that there is great sameness and simplicity in the pathology of this disease; but this is not the case:

The most common form of the disease is
in the form of a fever, and is usually
accompanied by a rapid pulse, and
a high temperature, and the patient
is often delirious, and the disease
is often fatal.

The cause of the disease is not always
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for the condition of the general circulation and that of particular parts, may be variously affected, and these various affections of the circulation constitute of its most striking peculiarities.

The disease has indeed a considerable range of character - in one season it will be mild - in another violent - in a third hold an intermediate course - and in a fourth assume all the varieties from the mildest to the most severe.

The causes of this diversity of type, are first - that the disease is sometimes accompanied with a mild excitement, which commences and terminates without producing any visceral derangement. Secondly at other times in its onset, advancement, or decline, it is accompanied with some congestion or inflammation which may terminate favourably or otherwise, according to the degree, time, or peculiar habit, which it may occur.

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has its origin in gastric irritation, which plainly accounts for those distressing symptoms, which attend the commencement of the disease, such as - anorexia, nausea, fulness and tension about the epigastrium, head-ache, costiveness, &c. These signs show themselves when the irritation is confined to the mucous lining of the Stomach.

But the skin, from the intimate sympathy, which exists between it and the Stomach, assuming the morbid action, by metastasis of the irritation from the internal to the external surface, which Metastasis being complete, the foregoing symptoms will be merged entirely in the affection of the skin.

But it now and then happens that the Metastasis is incomplete, the irritation seeming to be divided between the Stomach and skin, which being the case, the former organ will continue to be oppressed in a greater or less degree, and the eruption will be imperfect.

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disease in which typhoid symptoms may appear if the stomach is not soon relieved. the irritability of this organ will be aggravated, the pulse become small quick and irregular, excessive thirst, delirium, and coma supervene, and in fine all the disturbing phenomena which constitute a malignant disease. Again - the stomach may be completely relieved of every untoward symptom by the complete establishment of the eruption. yet if it should by any means be made to disappear, as by cold. the irritation may be translated again to the stomach, and a recurrence of all those alarming symptoms peculiar to this organ when irritated or inflamed will again disturb the patient. Again - the violence of the remote cause may be such as to overpower the vital energy of the system, so that reaction will fail to take place, and a collapse of the system will supervene, accompanied with all its terrible phenomena such as. cold surface, partial.

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clammy sweats, quick small and feeble pulse, low delirium, excessive irritability of stomach, collapsed countenance &c. And if these are not soon overcome by appropriate remedies we will find the pulse become irregular; vomiting of a foul dark matter from the stomach, resembling coffee grounds, involuntary discharge of urine and feces, salivaceous tenderness, convulsions and death.

The disease is commonly milder in summer when the weather is moderate; and most severe in winter and spring when it is cold and variable.

It is also so much influenced by the peculiar habit in which it occurs, that all its varieties may frequently be seen in persons of the same family or neighbourhood.

It would be well in unfavorable weather, to guard even strong children against cold during the prevalence of measles; as this precaution, together with a light and simple diet

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might do much to prevent serious attacks. The danger will always be greater in those persons, who, previously to an attack, labour under some internal disease or predisposition to it; and especially if that predisposition or disease be seated in the Pulmonary, or Digestive organs; for in such cases, the weight of the disease will in all probability fall upon the weakened part. On this account persons of this description ought if possible, ^{to remove} from the sphere of the affective Atmosphere; that they may escape the chance of ^{being} infected, until a more favourable time. If this cannot be done, the system should be prepared for the probable reception of the disease. And as soon as its effects begin to be developed, the greatest care should be taken to ward off any threatening of mischief in a vital organ.

If then children have suffered from some previous disease, the tone of the system is sometimes so much impaired, that it would be improper to

might be said to prevent some attacks. The
danger will always be greater in those persons who
are subject to an attack. It is more common in
those who are predisposed to it, and especially if the
predisposition is strong. It is more common in the
spring and autumn, for it is then that the weight
of the disease will be all probably felt upon the
system. But in the case of a person who is
not predisposed, the attack will be less severe.
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venture upon any very active measures when they are attacked with Measles. Under such circumstances it would be better, by diligent attention, to detect the first symptoms, and endeavour to counteract their tendency by a purgative, topical bleeding by cups and leeches and a blister over the affected part. And if the heat of the body be irregular, the warm bath will be highly useful in diffusing a more equable circulation and temperature. If these measures be not carried too far, they will be well borne, and may preserve the threatened organ from a serious attack; whereas more active ones might be very injurious by depressing the general powers, preventing the development of an equal excitement, and inducing extreme irritation of the nervous system.

But in vigorous constitutions where there is rather a predisposition than positive disease, bolder measures may be taken when any of the viscera seem to suffer from congestion. Here venesection will be highly

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useful, by which means such congestion will be more speedily overcome than by any other - But this is not to be solely relied on; it should be sometimes assisted by the warm bath, and followed by active purging blisters, and tepid drinks to determine to the surface -

The same disease is not always accompanied with the same concurrence of symptoms, and indeed they may be so modified by contingent circumstances as to indicate almost opposite modes of treatment and that practitioner will be most uniformly successful who guided by a sound judgment prescribes appropriate remedies, not for the name, but for the more prominent symptoms of a disease as they arise -

We occasionally see persons among the lower class of society left to the natural course of the disease, without the assistance of art, in whom it appears to terminate without any very evident signs of inflammation of the external organs having been induced - But although this may be the happy termination of most

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cases, yet, we are not to infer that such will always be the case; or that inflammation may not supervene and dangerously complicate the case. Therefore it would be safer even in these mild forms of the disease to adopt the opient plan: for though the excitement at first be apparently slight, yet, it might gradually gain ground, and materially disorder the function, and perhaps the organization of some important organ. And that tissue will be most likely to suffer, which is in the highest state of predisposition. If this part should be the mucous lining of the Bronchia, we will have symptoms of Catarrh. if the mucous coat of the Stomach gastritis, if of the bowels diarrhoea - if of the Pleura pleurisy; and in like manner throughout the different tissues. The brain may also share its part in these affections.

If then vomiting or sickness continue after the coming out of the eruption some abdominal irritation or inflammation may be suspected: and a diarrhoea or occasional griping pains occurring at this period or

further proofs that irritation or inflammation does exist. But the surest signs of such affections, are pain, nausea or purpura, flatulency of the stomach and bowels, and unnatural appearance of the stools. And if pain or nausea exist in the right or left Hypochondrium we may infer that the Liver or Spleen is affected.

There are often clear marks of cerebral fulgors before the appearance of the eruption, but these usually disappear as it takes place; so that inflammation of the brain rarely supervenes, unless the eruption suddenly strikes in as it is commonly called. If it should disappear before the usual time, and great anxiety, delirium, and coma or convulsive seizure; the indication will be to restore the eruption to the skin as quickly as possible. For which which purpose the warm bath, hot fomentations, blisters, wine and water, carbonate of ammonia, ether, and Antimonials would be proper.

There can be little doubt that more or less congestion attends the first obscure stage of all febrile diseases, and that

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the subsequent action of the heart and arteries, is the natural cure of such congestion. Now if the efforts of nature could always be depended on for bringing about this reaction, and if it was always suited to the removal of the previous congestion, there would be no use for the interference of art. But this is not the case, the excitement is often so excessive as to require the interference of art to moderate it, otherwise it would pass the salutary limits and produce organic disarrangements of the previously congested viscera.

It likewise occasionally happens that the efforts of action are too feeble to create the stage of reaction from the great degree of oppression occasioned by the congestion so far exhausting the recuperative powers that reaction cannot be instituted, and without the speedy assistance of art the patient must soon sink under this most dangerous modification of the disease.

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The treatment of measles will altogether depend on the character of its symptoms. If the case be simple, and the excitement moderate, the mildest treatment will be sufficient. barely keeping the bowels open with mild laxatives, with warm beverages, to act on the skin, the patient being confined to bed, and the temperature of the ^{room} duly regulated.

But should the fever prove violent producing pain in particular parts, our treatment should be vigorous in proportion to the importance of organs concerned. And above all other remedies we should rely on bloodletting. In the commencement of all inflammatory diseases, it is a measure that will hardly ever be requisite of. But when general bloodletting is ventured upon late, whatever chance of recovery remained may be extinguished by such a measure; for in the last stage of inflammatory diseases the energy of the heart and arteries and indeed of the whole system is so much exhausted by the previous excitement, that general

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bloodletting at that time, would have little or no influence on the local disease, but might immediately and mortally overpower the system. If venesection is indicated, and the patient is more than four years old bloodletting should be carried so far as to make a decided impression on the local affection. One large and well timed bleeding will do more good than half a dozen smaller ones, which would in the end only exhaust the system without checking the disease. But it is a very nice point to bleed children judiciously when they are attacked with visceral inflammation. In the young constitution there is a more intimate sympathetic connexion between the vascular and nervous systems than is observed in the more mature; so that a much greater degree of irritation is produced by exsiccative depletion in the former than in the latter. On account of this intimate mutual relation, moderate bleedings are generally more efficacious than large ones in the inflammatory affections of young

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children. If much irritation should arise it may be allayed by the tepid bath or an opiate.

When the lining membrane of the trachea or bronchial passages is inflamed, nature often seems to attempt its removal by a copious secretion of mucus; and when this is freely expectorated, patients generally do well, indeed it is a most propitious sign that the inflammation is rapidly departing; but if the expectoration should not be free and easy an emetic will oftentimes be our best remedy, which by the general shock it occasions will promote expectoration, and equalize excitement - After the operation of an emetic great benefit may be derived from the continued use of pectorating doses of antimony by promoting an easy expectoration, and preventing an undue collection of mucus.

In those cases marked with typhoid symptoms we should be careful how we resort too early to stimuli, lest we should aggravate the irritation or phlogosis that generally exists in some of the tubes; but we should have

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have recourse to topical bleedings by cups or leeches blisters
and having by these means overcome the topical affec-
tion, these unfavourable symptoms will for the most part
disappear. But should the patient rapidly sink we
would be driven to the use of Stimuli, and should the
irritability of the stomach be such as to preclude their
use internally, we should not neglect injections. The
scelus holds out to us by its tenacious sympathies a
considerable prospect of relief, which in the emergency of
the case should not escape our notice. The Physician
who holds the life of his patient dear will not forsake
him as long as the hour of destiny and danger is long,
as there is an instrument of relief within his reach and
a portion of the system preserving that degree of
sensibility to which he may apply it with any
probable hope of success.

The Sequela of this disease are many and various;
almost all the affections incident to the different tissues of
body follow in its train to be treated as original complaints.

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During convalescence from the Measles patients should not be suffered to expose themselves to a cold and changeable atmosphere, particularly such as are predisposed to pectoral complaints. For though they be apparently fast recovering, if they imprudently expose themselves, there is some other serious affection may supervene and prove dangerous or destructive. A light and cooling diet should also be pursued in for some time, for if a full and stimulating one be allowed, it will be almost sure to derange the digestive organs. If these precautions were strictly observed, much subsequent mischief might be prevented and the system restored to its pristine health and vigour. Moderate exercise in pleasant weather might also be indulged in, either in a carriage or on horseback the latter though I think is to be preferred. Fatigue should never be induced.

Treat Measles as we may they will sometimes prove fatal in spite of an exertions, either

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in its acute stage, or by its sequelae, such as
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internal cavities, as Ascites, Hydrothorax, Hydrocephalus
interius &c or by chronic inflammation of some
of the viscera, which terminates in disorganization, which
no skill in an art can repair.

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